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SENIOR ADVISERS TO ECE GOVERNMENTS
ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

INVENTORY OF EXISTING SAFETY GUIDELINES IN BIOTECHNOLOGY

MONOGRAPH

Information transmitted by the Government of Finland

SUMMARY OF SUBMISSION

1. Finland has no laws (or regulations) specifically concerned with biotechnology, i.e. genetically modified organisms and their safe use. On the other hand, these organisms have not been excluded from the scope of any individual statutes either. Thus, establishments intending to use genetically modified organisms will accordingly fall under laws relating to environmental protection, public health or labour protection.

2. The use of gene technology within an enclosed space may, if need be, become the subject of legal provisions and protective measures under laws concerning labour protection, environmental protection, public health and infectious diseases. The manufacture of certain products falls under specific laws, such as the Chemicals Act, the Fodder Act, the Fertilizers Act, the Foodstuffs Act or the Medicines Act.

3. At present, genetechnological field experiments are regulated only in so far as certain designated environmental or health hazards are involved. Within the entire field of gene technology, the putting on the market of products which contain genetically modified organisms is today the best regulated sector. Applicable to such products are some specific laws, e.g. the Pesticides Act, the Fodder Act, the Fertilizers Act, the Foodstuffs Act and the Medicines Act.

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4. The genetic modification of animals and the treatment of such animals fall under the laws on the prevention of cruelty to animals.

5. Environmental laws, e.g. the Air Pollution Control Act, the Act on Waters and the Waste Management Act, may also apply to prevent any hazards that the application of gene technology may have on the environment.

6. The prevention of health hazards in connection with the use of gene technology falls under the laws concerned with public health administration. The laws concerning infectious diseases serve also the same end.

7. Labour protection legislation is applicable to hazards involved by the use of gene technology.

8. The Council of State Decision on the Protection of Employees against Hazards due to Biological Factors came into force at the beginning of 1994. It also applies to genetically modified organisms.

9. In 1993, a Committee on Biotechnology prepared a draft for a specific Act on gene biotechnology deemed necessary for the implementation of directives 90/219/EEC and 90/220/EEC. The Act is expected to enter into effect as from the beginning of 1995.

LIST OF DOCUMENTS TRANSMITTED TO THE SECRETARIAT AND AVAILABLE FOR CONSULTATION UPON REQUEST

None